CORRESPONDENCE

"The Order of Merit"

To the Editor, Eugenics Review

SIR,—In my article on the Order of Merit (October 1944), there are two slips I wish to correct. In Table 6, p. 88, Sir G. M. Trevelyan should read Sir G. O. Trevelyan; and on p. 89, second column, Cosgrave should read Congreve.

B. S. Bramwell.

55 Hampstead Way, London, N.W.11.

Eugenics and Family Size

To the Editor, Eugenics Review

SIR,—The freest and best method of dealing with contraceptives is to make them available to all without restriction at Marriage Clinics, while at the same time national and voluntary organizations carry out constant propaganda to the public on the facts, figures and considerations which should guide them in planning family size. The propaganda should be reinforced by specific, detailed advice on the eugenically right family size to each individual couple when they apply to the Clinic for contraceptives. It would then be a fair assumption that any couple who misused contraception were not ignorant of their national duty, but selfish, foolish, defective in parental instinct, social pessimists or otherwise undesirable as parents. A temporarily increased fall in the national birth-rate, while these types proceeded to their self-extinction, need cause us no concern; they would be leaving behind them biologically better types, who were more than replacing themselves and influencing their children by heredity and family environment to do the same.

The national propaganda on family size, with which no doubt our Government will soon be attempting to combat our threatened population fall, must be carefully thought out to have a special appeal to the intelligent and unselfish so that it may have eugenic results as well as raising the average family size. This will be a problem for the expert psychologist, but I think that, if the population position is generally explained and emphasis laid on patriotism as a motive for having a large family, we will get eugenic results. During the past two years I have done a good deal of personal propaganda on eugenics to officers and men of units to which I have been attached, making a deliberate appeal to their patriotism and the response has been surprisingly good. There has been a small minority only too selfish to have any interest in the future of their country, or so foolish as to regard all eugenics as beneath human dignity; the latter's emotional catchword "studprevents them from thinking rationally on the subject. But I have found, too, remarkable

modesty, such that officers and N.C.O.s, physically A, and selected for their initiative, intelligence and powers of leadership, have found it difficult to believe that they were above the mental average and so should plan for more than four children. A Marriage Clinic would be able to put the matter for these people in its proper perspective. After an examination for inherited disease, an intelligence test, together with tests as they become available for genetic potential for other important qualities, the Marriage Clinic would be able to give any couple a definite figure for the number of children they should have and explain to them the considerations on which this figure was based. The scales would need to be carefully worked out by biologists and statisticians to fit with national. political and economic planning. As a starting point I suggest the following figures for family size in relation to I.Q.

Percentage of Mid-Parental Present Number of I.Q. Population Children 85 and less 22 None 85 to 100 Not more than a 33 100 to 115 25 4 to 6 115 and over 20 6 or more

If in consequence the 85-100 group averaged two children, the 100-115 averaged four, and the 115 and over averaged five, the population would be about replacing itself (266 children per 100 married women) and there would be a rise of about 100 points in the average I.Q. in one generation. In our colonies where an expanding population is desirable the figures should be higher, though probably nowhere is it desirable that those with an I.Q. of below 85 should have children; it is improbable that these children, even where not actually classifiable as defectives, would be able to make a contribution to the national welfare anything like equal to what they take from it in the way of communal social services.

C. O. CARTER, C.M.F. Capt., R.A.M.C.

" Lebensraum "

To the Editor, Eugenics Review

SIR,—The interesting letter of Mr. C. Wicksteed Armstrong (January 1945, p. 137) contains some controversial matter, but it is irrelevant to our subject. The comparatively relevant part can be summarized thus in a short sentence: "Modern warfare is dysgenic, so I appeal to leading eugenists to champion my view that major wars could be prevented by giving undeveloped territories to those powerful nations which have a high birth-rate and are also aggressive."

B. Dunlop, M.B. Popeswood Lodge.

Binfield, Berkshire.